

From the Desk of Father Maddaloni

I hate COVID-19. I pray for its destruction.

It has disrupted every aspect of our lives, including family life, social life, recreation, work, school, finances, and worship. It has caused us to pull back from each other physically, bodily.

I myself miss the activity which is so typical of this parish. I miss the children in the classrooms. I miss the volunteers and employees who must stay away and who usually make this place hum along so efficiently. I miss the heavy traffic of people coming to the campus for classes, meetings, prayer groups and devotions.



I miss celebrating Mass with you. One thing that makes the cancellation of public Masses so hard is that so many families have increased their commitment to sharing weekly in the celebration of the sacrifice of our Lord, and it pains me to see the momentum disrupted. As I have said before, the sacrifice of the Mass is the heart of our liturgical and communal worship, and, frankly, I am concerned about the effects of this pause on the spiritual life of so many who have come to appreciate better its value.

BUT, while it is true that we must distance ourselves from each other *bodily* at this time, we are both *body* and *soul*. We are not just physical beings. We are spiritual beings, and this is something we have in common with each other, with the angels, and with God himself. We who are members of the Communion of Saints – that great community of those living baptized into Christ, those who have died and await their time to come into the presence of God, and those who enjoy the Beatific Vision today – can unite ourselves with each other and with the holy angels in prayers of praise, thanksgiving and supplication. We need not distance ourselves from each other spiritually.

In this crazy time, let's all try to keep connected – through prayer, yes, but also through some practical worldly ways. Thank God for telephones, Internet and Facetime. It is easy to lose ourselves in panic and become inner-focused as we fight each other in the store aisles over toilet paper and ammunition, but we are made for something better than that. We are made for love. When we share love, we boost each other up. We make each other stronger. We comfort each other. We spread hope. As disciples, we walk the Way of the Cross together with Christ, not alone. We show the face of Christ *to* each other. We see the face of Christ *in* each other. Like Veronica, we wipe the face of the suffering. Like Simon, we shoulder the other's cross. And when we suffer ourselves, like the Good Thief, we know that Christ is at our side.

We at the parish can be reached by phone and email. As my Aunt Annette used to say, "This, too, shall pass." In the meantime, we move along this difficult Way together as the Body of Christ, who is the center of our lives.

*Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.*
- St. Patrick's Breastplate

I love you. I pray for your salvation.

- Fr. Maddaloni